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Oct 1913. April 1914

Answer

Canadian Pacific Railway Company

Department of Natural Resources.

FORESTRY BRANCH
OFFICE OF
SUPERINTENDENT.

Calgary, Alta., February 3, 1914.

QUOTE FILE NO

Sir Edmund Walker,
Chairman Board of Governors,
Univ. of Toronto.

Sir:-

During recent conversation with A. H. D. Ross,
Lecturer in Forestry at Toronto, he informed me that
Dean Fernow has made complaint to your President Falconer
regarding the character of instruction given in Mr. Ross's
subjects.

These include,

(1) Forest Mensuration

Forest Valuation

Survey

Appraisal

Reconnaissance etc.

(2) Forest Utilisation - embracing

Forest Exploitation

Logging - Milling

Refining of mill products.

Disposal of products etc.

- (3) Forest Protection - embracing
Protection and control of all
damages liable from every source.

As I understand the sustainment is that instruction given in these all important fields is not satisfactory or comprehensive enough to satisfy the demands of employers of graduates or graduates themselves.

I am an undergraduate of the Faculty of Applied Science (year 1908) and a graduate of the Faculty of Forestry (year 1911). Further in my capacity as Assistant Superintendent of one of our largest Canadian Corporations I have occasion to employ numbers of graduate and undergraduate foresters. (Field season of 1913 we had over 80 undergraduates and over 15 graduates on staff engaged on intensive forest reconnaissance of a highly practical and applied nature.

With this in view I should like to indicate for your information that I most strenuously deny and contradict your Forestry Dean's complaints with regard to Mr. Ross's ability and further point out the following facts re the training at the Faculty.

(1) Post graduate experience in my own instance and the same holds for several other graduates, indicates that supplementary and directed applied field practice is insufficient and weak.

(2) Instruction in several very cardinal fields is entirely omitted from your Forestry course curriculum

(successfully taught in certain American schools). These subjects must be included if the Toronto School is to hold its own.

Elementary instruction in certain theoretical fields overbalances very necessary elementary and practical instruction in certain distinctly utilitarian subjects.

e.g. (a) German Silvicultural practice VS modern

American experience.

(b) German languages VS English languages.

(c) Absurd dendrological detail VS broad and practical distinctions.

(d) Antiquated and fossilized administrative methods VS modern American methods.

(e) Superficial and "crammed" instruction in financial and business methods of forestal management VS absolutely necessary and careful exposition. etc. etc.

With regard to insufficient instruction - to my certain knowledge at the College and after in my association with Mr. Ross from the beginning of the school (I was the first freshman and the first ~~four~~ year graduate) I know that he of all the forestry lecturers attached to the staff, strenuously and persistently advocated the introduction and elaboration of the deficient instruction.

He of the entire organisation was apparently the only one to inform himself regarding the kind of instruction and ability to do things required by employers of forest school graduates in Western Canada, where over 70% of your

graduates are located.

In February 1913 a conference of employers was held in Toronto where the subject of deficient and theoretical instruction was discussed.

Dr. Fernow's scheme of curriculum was criticised most unmercifully the consensus of opinion being that it was altogether too "Germanified" absurdly theoretical and lacking in applied forest engineering practice.

Comparisons were made with the product of American schools and the difference in modern technical ability was most marked.

These various criticisms substantiated most completely your Mr. Ross's previous complaints to the Dean.

It now appears that Dr. Fernow realises that his curriculum must be basically reconstructed and established on a modern American basis.

But instead of calling in Mr. Ross and co-operating with the one man that knows how- he is making him the "goat" - this I consider most unfair and unjust, and I must refuse to remain silent any longer.

Last October before I was aware of any friction between Messrs. Ross & Fernow, I sent a memorandum to the Dean pointing out what I considered the weakness in his school. This letter I enclose.

Dr. Fernow in replying took a personal attitude which feeling was farthest from my thoughts in addressing him.

Fernow said in reply:-

"When a man can in two years secure such a prominent position
" as assistant Siperintendent of Forestry Branch of the C.P.R.
"he ought to be satisfied with his training. You have no doubt
"done much for yourself by your own effort".

Let me assure you Sir that if I had not
previous engineering training and practice such as I received
from the Faculty of Applied Science I should not be where I am
today.

Regarding ~~Mr.~~ Ross's efficiency let me say:-

As a classroom instructor. Close observation and association
extending over four years at school leads me to assert that he
was and is still one of the best lecturers in the staff.

As a fieldman. Close association also for a period
extending over three years leads me to assert that he has always
been "ahead of the procession" in methods and their application
to secure the maximum efficiency.

From an authoriative source I was informed
that you had about arranged for a permanent practice camp for
the Forest School when the whole thing was upset, the Government's
sympathy estranged, and a host of powerful enemies made by Dr.
Fernow's unjust and unreasonable attitude taken towards Hon.
Frank Cochrane's proposals in this regard. Fernow's recent
strictures on the Northern Ontario Clay Belt (from wide exper-
ience in the north I assert that he is absolutely wrong) and
Trent Valley Watershed since have not made it any easier for you
to get such a practice ground for the school.

Other schools get their instruction in that
way, why not Toronto?

Briefly:-

(1) Dr. Fernow as dean directing the policy of his institution is solely responsible for the inefficient and weak instruction given (one developed from the ridiculously theoretical side without any regard to modern Canadian requirements now, not in 1960).

(2) A. H. D. Ross has demonstrated his ability and efficiency both in the class room and in the field.

(3) Fernow with his egregious personal egotism resented Mr. Ross's honest and courageous criticism and constructive suggestions, result, Enmity and intrigue leading to Mr. Ross's proposed removal.

I suggest that Mr. Ross's recommendations and proposals to modernise the course be carried out, and he is essentially the man to do it; that on Dr. Fernow's retirement Mr. Ross be appointed Director (and let it be soon for the good of Toronto).

That the Faculty of Forestry be merged into the Faculty of Applied Science.

(The profession demands cardinally a good working knowledge of the engineering sciences.)

In closing, Sir, as an honorable graduate of Toronto, and with a sympathetic and lovable regard for my Alma Mater I sincerely hope that Dr. Fernow's charges are fully investigated and full responsibility placed where it belongs - (on Fernow's shoulders).

Pernicious and contemptible insinuations regard-

ing Canadian Institution and Canadian ability should not be tolerated from the moulders of our Canadian manhood -(such has been Fernow's attitude since coming to Canada.)

Yours very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. M. S. L. L.", written diagonally across the page.

Asst. Supt. of Forestry.

LME/JMC

Copy

Calgary, Alta., Octr. 31, 1913.

Personal & Confidential.

General Memo.

Dr. B. E. Fernow,
Queens Park,
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Sir:-

I write this letter with a constructive idea in view, namely, the strengthening of the position of the Forest School in the workaday world.

In my official capacity as Assistant Superintendent of the C.P.R. Forestry Branch I have occasion to use during the field season many forest school students.

The field season of 1913 we employed in the intensive reconnaissance and valuation of 230,000 acres of C.P.R. Tie Reserves, over 80 students, graduates and undergraduates, of twelve different universities and only 11.3% of these were from Toronto. Of our permanent force of technical forest engineers, seventeen, only two are graduates of Toronto.

You ask yourself why this is the cause?

Among other reasons:-

- (1) Insufficient practical field experience.
- (2) Insufficient practical technical training, along engineering lines (subjects not on your curriculum).

(3) Immaturity of men.

If "our school", and I speak feelingly as a graduate of Toronto, is to hold its own in Western Canada a considerable amount of active, live and practical training must be introduced into your curriculum. (When a man enters a school of applied science he generally receives applied science).

Toronto men who have not had previous engineering training or experience fall down pitiably when put face to face with problems in their own business. True, to date in Governmental lines your graduates have not needed much more than they receive in your institution -but- I know you realise as well as many of us that the Government field will soon be supplied and your men must seek employment in other fields.

In this connection let me point out here, that the largest percentage of the graduates of the University of Washington Forest School are absorbed eagerly by the Lumbering and Logging interests on the coast. This school has met the problem of finding many outlets of diversified employment. This school has fitted its graduates to take hold of applied and relative problems and carry them efficiently to a successful completion.

You have at present a strong and capable corps of instructors Messrs. Ross White and Howe. Every one of them experts in his line, however, they naturally follow in teaching, those subjects that are laid down for them.

Your Mr. Ross during three or four summers of extensive and careful study of Western Canadian and American

conditions realised as apparently no one else on your staff (until this summer) the need for considerable enlargement of the scope of your institution, and the same defects were brought forcibly to Mr. White's attention this year during his sojourn in the West.

Here are my constructive suggestions take them for what they are worth:

(1) Include in your curriculum a thorough theoretical grounding in engineering practice as applied to Topographical Reconnaissance, Railroad Construction, including location, construction, maintenance and operation.

(2) Basic study of mechanical engineering

(3) Comprehensive study of accounting as applied to logging, milling and applied forest management.

(Your men are lamentably weak on relative finance.)

(4) Elementary knowledge of modern electrical practice.

(5) Reduce considerably much of the absurd dendrological detail and fanciful German silvicultural practice promulgated etc. etc.

(6) Elevate and enlarge considerably the subject of wood preservation. Only those closely in touch with the timber situation realise how soon the preservation of wood in certain lines will be practised universally in Canada.

Finally give your men a chance to make good as soon as they leave College, other Forest Schools are doing it, why not Toronto.

Co-operation is necessary both within the school and without, the working knowledge of Toronto Graduates is alright

as far as it goes but -for the sake of the future of Toronto- put your school on a Modern American basis, and make your product fit to compete with graduates from Michigan and Washington.

Yours in the best interests of Toronto

"L. M. Ellis."

Asst. Superintendent.

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Canadian Pacific Railway Company
Department of Natural Resources.

FORESTRY BRANCH
OFFICE OF
SUPERINTENDENT.

Calgary, Alta., Mar. 3rd, 1914.

QUOTE FILE NO. 1402

Sir B. E. Walker,
Chairman of the Board of Governors,
University of Toronto,
Canadian Bank of Commerce,
Toronto, Ont.,

Dear Sir:-

Just a "tickler" regarding my memoranda to
you on Feb. 3rd.

I hope that you will consider the criticisms
and suggestions offered in that letter. My desire is to
see Toronto "ahead in the procession" and the points
emphasized are the results of close and persistent contact
with practical forestry and lumbering interests in Western
Canada.

Yours in the interests of my

Alma Mater.

LME/BF

Asst. Superintendent of Forestry

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Canadian Pacific Railway Company
Department of Natural Resources.

FORESTRY BRANCH
OFFICE OF
SUPERINTENDENT.

Calgary Alta., Mar, 20th, 1914

QUOTE FILE NO.

Robert, Alexander, Falconer, M.A.

President University of Toronto,
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Mr. Falconer:-

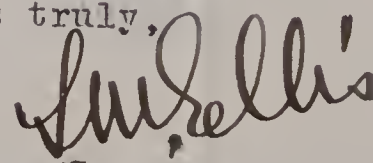
In recent correspondence with your Chairman, Sir Edmund Walker, he informed me that Mr. A.H.D. Ross, Lecturer in Forestry, Faculty of Forestry, would not be re-appointed on July 1st.

In this connection could you inform me who is to be appointed, it is a matter of concern to all those engaged in the practice of Forestry in Canada, we are as vitally interested as the school itself as we look to the Forest Schools of Canada as far as possible to draw on for our requirements in technical foresters.

Hoping that it will be possible for you to let me have this information.

I remain,

Yours truly,



LME/BEF.

Asst. Superintendent of Forestry

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April 1st, 1914

S. M. Ellis, Esq.,
Assistant Superintendent, Forestry,
Canadian Pacific Railway,
Calgary, Alta.

Dear Mr. Ellis:

We have not yet made the appointment to the position which will be vacated by Mr. Ross on the first of July next. We have been making inquiries, and hope before long to be able to make an announcement as to a person qualifying to meet the needs of the Faculty, but I am not yet ready to give any name.

Yours sincerely,

President.

